



Frequently Asked Questions The West Capitol Terrace Project

Q1: What is the West Capitol Terrace Project?

A1: The West Capitol Terrace Project is an initiative to redesign the space west of the Capitol Building from parking lots into a park-like public sanctuary in which people can picnic, walk, contemplate, gather and meet.

Q2: Where is the location?

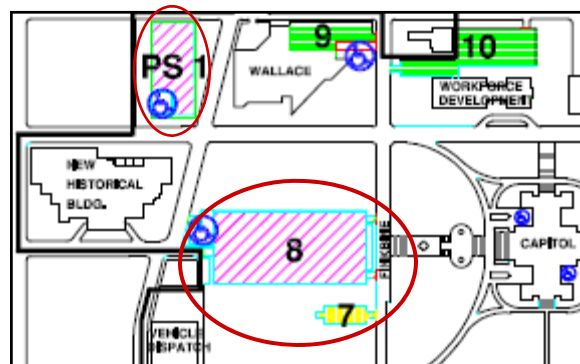
A2: The project site is the space bordered by Grand Avenue on the North, Walnut Street on the South, Pennsylvania Avenue and East 7th Street on the West, and Finkbine Drive on the East. This area comprises approximately 10.0 acres of land.

Q3: What is currently located there?

A3: The site is now the location of two on-grade asphalt parking lots (Parking Lots 7 and 8) with traffic control gates, pipe and chain bollards, and shoe-box style light fixtures that contrast sharply with the elegance and beauty of the Capitol Building and its grounds. All three of these parking lots were built as temporary constructions in the 1970s to provide for parking needs of nearby state facilities.

Q4: Where will state employees and visitors to the Capitol Complex park when these lots are removed?

A4: In February 2003, a seven-level parking facility was opened on the northwest corner of East Grand and Pennsylvania Avenues. With over 800 parking stalls, it is intended to replace Lots 7 and 8 west of the Capitol when they are removed. A complete map of all parking options on the Capitol Complex can be found online at <http://das.gse.iowa.gov/images/parking3.pdf>.



Q5: What are the project goals of the West Capitol Terrace Project?

A5: The goals are:

- Use the established Capitol Complex Master Plan as the guide for the site design;
- Protect the views from the Capitol to the City of Des Moines, and views from the City to the Capitol;
- Recognize this project in the context of the City's overall Gateway East planning efforts;

- Provide space for public events;
- Provide space for public art; and
- Create a clear and integrated transition from the red brick construction of the East Village to the Capitol Complex.

Q6: What are the guidelines for this project?

A6: The guidelines are:

- Consider sustainable design guidelines on this project;
- The space should be designed so that it does not invite activities that would damage the site improvements;
- The Records & Property Building (currently under renovation) will remain in its current location (corner of East 7th Street and Court Avenue);
- Pedestrian access from Pennsylvania Avenue to Finkbine Drive will conform to the “Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines”; and
- Dedicated trees need to be identified and protected or relocated when acceptable.

Q7: What is the initial design concept and who has been hired to design this project?

A7: The design team of Brian Clark and Associates, in association with Jeffrey Morgan Architecture Studio, Bishop Engineering and Seneca Environmental Services, has been retained to document the existing condition of the West Capitol Terrace site and develop a design to reflect the goals and ideas identified in the Capitol Complex Master Plan.

The preliminary design plan consists of Entrance and Central Plazas that begin at Locust Street with a large map of Iowa oriented true north, tying in the county information in the sidewalks of East Locust Street leading to the Capitol. In the plaza leading up to the Capitol there are benches and fountains, and room for public events. Outside of the paved central path are a series of terraced gardens. Plants in the gardens will frame the views from the Capitol and the city, and educate visitors about the native plants of Iowa and plants that are traditionally used to decorate our homes.



Brian Clark + Associates

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Q8: How will the project be funded?

A8: The legislature passed and the Governor signed a bill for an FY2007 appropriation of \$2.3 million to complete Phase I of the West Capitol Terrace Project. (Phase I primarily constitutes removal of the existing parking lots and construction of the Central Plaza, while Phases II and III are the Entrance Plaza – located at East 7th Street and East Locust Avenue – and the outlying gardens and park areas.)

Q9: Why is this project important for the Capitol Complex, the City of Des Moines, and the State?

A9: The Capitol Building is one of the most recognizable landmarks in the State of Iowa. Every year approximately 100,000 people visit this “Great Place” in our capital city. The City of Des Moines formally recognized the importance of the Capitol Building to the make-up of the cityscape in a Memorandum of Understanding signed between the City and the Department of General Services (now the Department of Administrative Services) in October 2001. Among other provisions, the MOU includes an agreement to improve the appearance of the west lawn of the Capitol Building by removing or modifying the surface parking lots west of Finkbine Drive. The West Capitol Terrace Project is the fulfillment of this agreement in a way that can be appreciated by all visitors to the Capitol Building, as well as the businesses of and visitors to the East Village and the entire City of Des Moines.

Visually, the West Capitol Terrace will provide a beautiful entrance from the west to our State’s grandest building, as well as a link between the East Village and the Capitol Complex. For pedestrians, this renovation will provide, for the first time, a clear walkway from downtown Des Moines to the seat of our state’s government. For citizens, this will be a public space open to all – expanding on and encouraging the idea of bringing people closer to the legislative process by bringing them closer to the building where that process takes place.

Q10: What is the current status of this project?

A10: Phase One of the construction began the week of July 17, 2006. The first phase of construction – removal of the parking lots and construction of the Central Plaza – is expected to be completed by June 2007, in time for the Hy-Vee Triathlon, which will end at the west steps of the Capitol Building.

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